

God Centered Solutions to Man Centered Problems Part 1 - Romans 3-21-22 – August 7th, 2011

- The Apostle Paul has just turned a huge corner beginning here in verse 21 and everything up to this point, has been leading to the main point.
- I like how one commentator so aptly put it; "There's a glorious transition from the judgment of Romans 3:20 to the justification of Romans 3:21.
- Another likened it to unfolding Paul's manifesto back in 1:16-17, where he declared that he was not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- The reason being that it is the power of God for salvation, by faith, and in it a righteousness of God is revealed to those who believe by faith.

- Be that as it may, there are still some problems that have to be resolved in order for us to be the recipients of the power of God for salvation.
- The first problem is, the law is powerless to save us, yet because not one jot nor tittle can be done away with it, we're still condemned under it.
- The second problem is that God can't just "let us off the hook," because if He did, then He would cease to be just, and He would become evil.

- In other words, if the Judge of the universe, in the courtroom of eternity, let the guilty deserving the death penalty go free, He would be unjust.
- That is the dilemma; how does a just and righteous God remain just bringing salvation when the law requires that we be condemned to death?
- If God lets us off, then He's unjust, if He condemns us to death, He's deemed unfair or even worse yet, unloving. It's a proverbial "Catch-22."

- I would suggest that any hope, for any solution to this divine dilemma is lost by virtue of its sheer impossibility in the realm of our humanity.
- I believe this is precisely the point! A man centered problem remains impossible, until it comes to a God centered solution where it is possible.
- This may explain, though not excuse, many of the problems in our lives today, even in the church today. We have become man/self centered.

- Replete throughout the pages of Holy Writ, we are given such horrific and graphic detail of great men of God, sinning so greatly against God.
- Why? It's so I'll realize that my life is not centered on who or how I am, but rather, my life will be centered on Who God is, in spite of who I am.
- God reveals to me how good He is, by showing me how bad I am. In so doing He re-centers me from it being all about me, to being about Him.

- It's for this reason, I've titled this series; "God Centered Solutions to Man Centered Problems," as it's the only way to resolve the divine dilemma.
- Not only is this the solution to the divine dilemma, it can also be the solution to my problems if I'm centered on Him, and not made it about me.
- More specifically; if I've made it about me, then the solutions must come from me. We see this in our first one that's found here in verse 21.

1. Come from God apart from the law (Verse 21)

- v21 Paul says that now a righteousness from God, apart from the law, testified to by both the Prophets and the law, has now been made known.
- God hasn't done away with the law, He's made known another way apart from the law, and it comes vis-a-vis the only One Who fulfilled the law.
- It comes by way, of the One Who said; "I am the way, the truth, and the life." There's no other way apart from this righteousness from God.

- There's no way that I, in and of myself, can ever be righteous enough under the law to receive a verdict of; "not guilty" according to the law.
- Not only has God done this for me, He's done this instead of me, which is why this righteousness from God, has been made known by God.
- When Paul writes that the Law and Prophets testify to this, he is painting a portrait of Jesus Christ on the canvass of Old Testament scripture.

2. Come through faith to those who believe (Verse 22)

- v22 Paul now takes it a step further and says how that this righteousness from God, comes through faith in Jesus Christ, to all who believe.
- It's important that we note the order in which Paul presents this. Here-to-for he's introduced man's problem, so as to present God's solution.
- He goes from first telling them how it does NOT come, before he tells them how it does come. Sometimes we must unlearn, in order to learn.

- Paul ever so brilliantly tells them that it doesn't come through keeping the law, it only comes through faith in Jesus Christ Who fulfilled the law.
- He writes this in this way for a number of reasons not the least of which is that in their minds the jury is still out related to their keeping the law.
- We can become guilty of doing the same thing, and we don't realize that when we do, we're subtly and satanically putting God on trial instead.

- Is it me, or have you noticed that virtually everything we see especially as it relates to whether or not someone is guilty is decided by us now?
- We can simply text our vote, voicing our opinion, and seemingly decide a death penalty case, which gives us the sense of being the judges.

Recently, a secular polling organization in North Carolina by the name of "Public Policy Polling" released the results of several polls mostly relating to Americans' perception of Congress. However one group of questions engaged Americans' current feelings toward God, asking; "If God exists, do you approve or disapprove of 'IT'S' performance?" The poll found that only 52% approve of God's performance, while 9% disapprove, and astonishingly, a whopping 40% of those surveyed were "not sure" if they approved of God's performance. ...The same press release also showed John Boehner as having an approval rating of 33 percent, the same as the rest of Congress. However, more Americans were unsure of Boehner's performance while much more were disapproving of the performance of the legislative branch as a whole.

- What's interesting is, that this describes what the condition of the world, and sadly, the church will be in this, the last lukewarm Laodicean days.
- The church "of the Laodicean's" had voted God out, which is why Jesus is on the outside of this church knocking on the door to come back in.
- This last day's lukewarm Laodicean church was neither "faithful" nor "true," nor was it "hot" or "cold," because they as the "laity" would "decide."
- The name is the nature and the interpretation of name Laodicea is derived by the combination of two English words, both "laity" and "decide."

- In order to have a better understanding of this church we need to know that Laodicea was the wealthy banking center of the region at that time.
- This wealthy city of Laodicea was also known for their trend setting fashions. They would export their garments all over the known world.
- Interestingly, Laodicea was the entertainment capital of the world, and with their 30,000 seat amphitheatre, became the Hollywood of their day.

- In addition to this, Laodicea was known for their cutting edge medical breakthroughs, and created a sophisticated eye salve to improve vision.
- Laodicea was so rich, that they built a six-mile aqueduct from Hierapolis, (Col 4:13), in order to have the water from their natural hot springs.
- This is why Jesus rebuked them and warned them to repent. They were blind to how wretched, pitiful, poor, and naked they were in God's eyes.
- So much so, He wanted to vomit them out of His mouth. They were as lukewarm as the water from Hierapolis was when it reached Laodicea.

- Perhaps you'll indulge me for just a moment as I close with a connecting of the dots between the Romans, the Laodicean's, and us here today.
- If everything is centered on me, and is about me, then it will be up to me, to decide whether or not, the jury is still out, or the verdict has come in.
- Instead of a righteousness from God, through faith, apart from the law, I decide in self-righteousness, apart from God, that I have kept the law.